

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed July 13, 2006, Applicants amended claims 1, 11, 23 and 24, and added new claims 25-27. No new matter was added by these claim amendments.

Claims 1-14 and 16-27 are presented for examination.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-14 and 16-25 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Cox et al., US 2003/0212451 ("Cox"), or under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cox in view of Helgerson et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,149,996 ("Helgerson") or Gunderson, US 2004/0204749 ("Gunderson").

As amended, claims 1-14 and 16-25 cover a grip with a body region having a first end and a second end, where the outer diameter of the first end is greater than the outer diameter of the second end, and the outer diameter of the first end is greater than an outer diameter of a stent when the stent is in an unexpanded configuration.

Cox does not disclose or suggest such a grip. Applicant does not concede that the Examiner's interpretation of Cox is appropriate, but, even assuming that such an interpretation were appropriate, the portion of Cox's device which the Examiner's construes as being a grip does not include a body region having a first end and a second end, where the outer diameter of the first end is greater than the outer diameter of the second end, and the outer diameter of the first end is greater than an outer diameter of a stent when the stent is in an unexpanded configuration. Nor does Cox suggest such a grip.

Helgerson does not cure Cox's infirmities, at least because, like Cox, Helgerson does not disclose or suggest a body region having a first end and a second end, where the outer diameter of the first end is greater than the outer diameter of the second end, and the outer diameter of the first end is greater than an outer diameter of a stent when the stent is in an unexpanded configuration. Neither Cox nor Helgerson, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the subject matter covered by claims 1-14 and 16-25. There is no suggestion to combine these references to provide such subject matter, and, even if Cox and Helgerson were combined in the manner indicated by the Examiner, the result would not be the subject matter covered by claims 1-14 and 16-25.

Gunderson also does not cure Cox's infirmities, at least because, like Cox, Gunderson does not disclose or suggest a body region having a first end and a second end, where the outer diameter of the first end is greater than the outer diameter of the second end, and the outer diameter of the first end is greater than an outer diameter of a stent when the stent is in an unexpanded configuration. Neither Cox nor Gunderson, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the subject matter covered by claims 1-14 and 16-25. There is no suggestion to combine these references to provide such subject matter, and, even if Cox and Gunderson were combined in the manner indicated by the Examiner, the result would not be the subject matter covered by claims 1-14 and 16-25.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-14 and 16-25.

Applicants enclose a check to cover fees associated with excess claims. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: September 12, 2006

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